書　評

Native-Speakerism in Japan: Intergroup Dynamics in Foreign Language Education

Stephanie A. Houghton and Damian J. Rivers (Eds.).
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要　旨

今日まで外国語としての英語（EFL）教育現場では，ネイティブ・スピーカー（英語母語話者）の使用する英語が唯一のモデルとされてきた。しかし, 近年においてネイティブ・スピーカー中心主義（native-speakerism）を疑問視する応用言語学研究者や語学教育者が活発な議論を展開するようになった。その背景には英語の非母語話者人口が母語話者人口よりも多くなっていることや ASEAN 等の公共機関が英語を共通語として使用するようになったことなどがあるからだ。

本書では様々な視点から日本におけるネイティブ・スピーカー中心主義を検証する。英語教育政策の矛盾点，英語教員の雇用問題，教室での日本語使用禁止の功罪，人種主義の影響などといった幅広い課題が取り上げられている。英語教育において学習者や教員の基本的人権が尊重される環境整備のための問題提起が多く含まれている。

This edited volume of papers critiquing native-speakerism in English language teaching (ELT) in Japan, authored by those directly involved as language educators, is a welcome addition to the literature and very timely. Most Japanese universities are currently undergoing yet another wave of English language curricula revision to meet the perceived needs to prepare its graduates for an ever-increasingly globalized economy (Toh, 2013). Houghton and Rivers have brought together diverse theoretical

and empirical works to explore the phenomenon of native-speakerism, with the purpose of demystifying the basis of ELT policy and practice in Japan. The book is divided into five parts, covering renewed conceptualizations of native-speakerism, workplace conflict, employment policies and patterns, nuanced understanding of native-speakerism as contemporary social phenomenon, and socio-historical viewpoints. Houghton and Rivers' renewed definition of native-speakerism goes beyond Holliday (Chapter 1), by stating that native-speakerism "…is prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination, typically by or against foreign language teachers, on the basis of either being or not being perceived and categorized as a native speaker of a particular language…" (p. 14). Readers engaged in ELT in Japan may recognize their own experiences reflected in many of these papers. It is hoped that with a better understanding of the forces in play, readers will become better equipped to examine and address the issues they face in their own teaching situations.

Defining native-speakerism

In the sole chapter of Part 1 titled "'Native Speaker' Teachers and Cultural Belief," Holliday outlines the limitations of his earlier definition of native-speakerism that focused on how the 'native speaker' teacher has served as a source of Western culture and ELT methodology (Holliday, 2006). He then calls for a 'paradigm shift' that would work toward unraveling the ideologies and practices arising from native-speakerism for its eventual demise. He suggests replacing the 'cultural disbelief' widely found in ELT discourses that trivializes the abilities of non-native speaker teachers and students to adequately engage in classroom practices based on 'Western' pedagogy such as 'autonomy' and 'critical thinking' with 'cultural belief,' which "perceives the cultural background of *any* teacher or student to be a resource" (p. 21, emphasis in original). His research agenda includes both uncovering the ideology and discourse of native-speakerism and recognizing the cultural contributions being made by all teachers and students in classrooms, teacher lounges, and other venues. Aboshiha (2008) was cited as an example of how a U.K. researcher was able to decipher her teacher interviewee's attitudes toward the race of another teacher although no specific words connoting race were used. In a similar vein, the work of Motha (2014), novice teacher participants revealed the racially coded way in which ESL pupils were discussed by their non-ESL

colleagues in U.S. public schools. The racialization of both teachers and students is but one of the many issues requiring greater consideration to further deconstruct native-speakerism.

Workplace conflict

The six chapters in Part 2 focus on workplace conflict, illustrating in detail how native-speakerism is manifested in hiring practices, teaching assignments, pay discrepancies, and other work-related factors that can severely affect the professional careers of language teaching professionals. I will focus on four of those chapters below. To begin with, Petrie in Chapter 2 reports on the two decades, spanning the late 1980's to early 2000's, of litigation against universities in Italy through the European Union Court, brought on by non-Italian language teachers, citing violations of European Union (EU) laws that guarantee equality in matters of employment, remuneration, and working conditions (p. 29). Requirements for foreign language teachers often included 'native-speaker' status, thus leading to the conflation with nationality and creating separate and unequal categories for such teachers. The deeply entrenched nature of such practices and the lack of will exhibited by educational institutions, in this case, Italy, sets the stage for the following chapters that deal with accounts of workplace conflicts surrounding 'native speaker' teachers in Japan.

During the same era in Japan, the court case brought against Kumamoto Prefectural University in 2000 is described and analyzed by Masden in Chapter 3. This particular case helped to bring the issue of discrimination against non-Japanese university faculty to public attention. Involving a small number of foreign language teachers who organized a labor union to negotiate for better working terms and conditions, two of whom were subsequently fired, issues concerning unclear contract terms, 'native speaker' status as a requirement for job application, and an institution blaming 'cultural differences' as the cause of misunderstanding between the two parties are examined in depth. Although the case was defeated in both local and appeals courts, widespread support for the case as evidenced by 10,000 signatures collected from the local general public and the ensuing reportage in internationally-known publications such as *The New York Times* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* highlighted the interest generated by this labor issue (p. 56–57).

Chapter 4 serves to broaden this topic in which Houghton chronicles her professional experiences as a 'native speaker' language teacher and the incumbent changes in institutional categorization of such teachers as Japanese national universities underwent restructuring in 2004. She focuses on how linguicism operated in multiple ways, from 'native speaker' status required for *gaikokujin kyoushi* (foreign lecturers), who were then rehired under a newly coined position *ibunka gengo kyouiku tantou kyouin* (teacher of different language and culture). Those same 'native speakers' of English or Korean were then required larger teaching loads, the rationale being that such teachers were not competent to handle administrative duties requiring Japanese ability, although some actually were able to (p. 70). Required to teach English classes monolingually yet forbidden to use English during department meetings about those classes, Houghton illustrates how native-speakerism operated to both valorize and repudiate English within the institution, invariably placing those who were judged to be lacking Japanese language ability in an inferior status and outside of decision-making processes involving foreign language education.

Rivers' account in Chapter 5 of his attempt to exercise his professional role as teacher-researcher at his workplace reveals the risk involved in such an undertaking. Conducting research on colleagues' views of their work as 'native-speaker' teachers and the monolingual methodology they were required to use led to his marginalization within the workplace and ensuing disrupted human relations and employment status. The discrepancies between purported institution policy of exposing students to diverse Englishes and the largely White 'native speaker' teachers from 'Inner Circle' countries (Kachru, 1985) is documented. He also exposes their duties of being stationed in glass-walled lounges as casual conversation partners for students as a practice that perpetuates the notion that the goal of learning English is to speak with 'native speakers'. Institutional thinking behind the common practice of hiring such teachers on limited term contracts is not only based on economic reasons, but justified by convoluted thinking that extended experience in Japan taints the those teachers' 'freshness' because they begin to adjust their English to suit the needs of the students (Noriguchi, 2006). Rivers' story informs us that resisting native-speakerism at the workplace involves risk, especially when employment status is oftentimes unstable. However, his suggestion that blind acceptance to unsound demands by the university poses the risk of being accomplice to what could be described as limiting students' exploration of English usage in a world much more

complex than what is staged at most institutions.

Employment policy and patterns

In Part 3, five authors deal with English language education policies that lay the foundations for how teachers are employed at a range of institutions, oftentimes resulting in workplace conflict as illustrated above. I select three of such chapters in which the authors analyze government policy papers pertaining to English education, interpret narratives of institutional insiders involved with hiring English teachers, and examine the influence of wider immigration policies. To begin with, Hashimoto in Chapter 11 uses government policy texts, both in the original Japanese and English translations when available, to analyze how 'native speakers' are politically constructed to serve the purposes of the Japanese education system. One of her focuses is the conflicting roles that 'native-speakers' play in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET), which underwent intense government review in 2010. The task force found that an "ambiguous relationship between language education and international exchange had resulted in ineffective practice of accepting ALTs who did not possess qualifications in language teaching" (p. 161). Although JET participants are often thought of as assistant language teachers (ALTs), a close reading of government documents reveal that they are referred to as 'native speakers' who are to be utilized as "resources" by Japanese teachers in the conducting of foreign language activities (p. 163). Conflicts concerning JET's role in secondary school classrooms throughout its history are documented by McConnell (2000), illustrating the ambiguity of the relationship between 'native speakers' and ELT within a major government-sponsored program. Such ambiguity is carried over into higher education as well, as the next example reveals.

In a study that examines the experiences of full-time university faculty involved with the recruitment and hiring of English language teachers, Hayes in Chapter Nine analyzes interview data from 24 people, 12 Japanese and 12 non-Japanese working at universities known for their English programs. The interviewees consistently referred to teacher candidates as being Japanese/non-Japanese, Japanese/foreigner, and Japanese/native speaker, "suggesting fundamentally racialized hiring practices" (p. 136). When discussing the merits of Japanese candidates, their purported greater knowledge of the student population was a primary factor in their favor. In addition, a good candidate

having an age normative resumé was preferred, thereby disadvantaging women who might have experienced interruptions in their educational and professional careers. Strong English skills were not necessarily required, as candidates who could "understand the complex corporate culture" of the Japanese university were considered valuable (p. 142). In contrast, when considering non-Japanese candidates for non-tenure track positions, having 'native speaker' status often allowed for relaxed academic requirements, with a master's degree in any subject matter sometimes sufficing. Not possessing strong Japanese language skills was oftentimes overlooked, although this has changed in recent years. In addition, having a personality that supposedly lends to successful collaboration with Japanese colleagues and staff has become another way of evaluating a non-Japanese candidate's worth. The dearth of tenure-track positions available to non-Japanese candidates was commonly noted among the interviewees, with some commenting that such a lack at their institution has existed for decades.

Interviewees' candid comments on how they felt about decisions made on individual cases and the overall way posts were filled based largely on the candidates' having Japanese nationality or 'native speaker' status revealed the tensions engendered. Efforts at achieving a gender balance on the faculty varied widely, with both Japanese and 'native speaker' women faring the worst. Despite recent efforts to eliminate nationality and 'native speaker' status from job announcements, those sitting on hiring committees reported using the same racialized and gendered criteria as shown above. My own experience may be explained perhaps by institutional demands that I take on both roles, i.e. act and pass as Japanese when performing necessary administrative duties but switch to bubbly mode in the language classroom (Kusaka, 2014).

In Chapter 13, Heimlich synthesizes other concurrent employment issues in Japan involving foreigners, suggesting that the positioning of 'native speaker' reflects a larger pattern of persistent xenophobia, by which the role of foreigners in Japan is to not broaden intercultural understanding but rather to fortify Japaneseness (p. 171). In the Gallagher case of 2000, the plaintiff sued Asahigawa University for being fired based on the institution's claim that she was no longer useful as an English language teacher because she lacked 'freshness' as an outsider due to her marriage to a Japanese national and long-term Japan residence (Fox, 2001). That type of argument echoes that of Noriguchi, 2006 above, whereby 'native speaker' English teachers are evaluated not for their professional achievements but their perceived 'otherness' and ability to fit the role of the outsider.

Such a phenomenon can be placed within the long history of hiring foreign nationals since the Meiji era as *gaikokujin kyoushi* in national universities, whereby their status is such that they can be treated differently from Japanese colleagues by virtue of being non-Japanese (p. 170). Heimlich goes on to point out that the 2004 abolishment of that employment category then made way for the introduction of limited term contracts for 'native speakers' both in public and private universities, creating an constant revolving door supply of language teachers. Not too long after this, the government, in 2009, offered to pay *Nikkei*, largely from Brazil and Peru who had served as needed factory labor from the 1990's, to leave Japan and promise not to return (p. 173). Seen within this scenario of increasingly hostile conditions for workers formerly invited to work in Japan, the demarcation of 'native speaker' language teachers as expendable resources emerges.

Native-speakerim: Multi-faceted contemporary phenomenon, socio-historical viewpoints

The final six chapters found in Parts 4 and 5 delve further into the discourses shaping the native-speakerism phenomenon, with more examples of counter-stories from language practitioners in the thick of things as well as suggestions about how the discussion can be moved forward to initiate changes. Some of the ideas presented in this section reiterates those previously introduced above, but for the sake of reinforcing key concepts used when deconstructing such a complex phenomenon, I am including them here. For example, in Chapter 13, Toh reminds the reader that the purpose of intense scrutiny of native-speakerism is not to fault those individuals who may be or not 'native speakers' of English involved in ELT in Japan, but to probe how discursive practices create essentialized 'Others' who are hired to fill roles created and maintained by systems that do not necessarily have the students' or teachers' best interests in mind. He proposes the categories of "referent, semiotic entity, and ideologized project" when analyzing native-speakerism (p. 183). By referent, Toh is alluding to a stereotypical, shorthand version of characteristics such as a preferred accent, race, and nationality embedded in the term 'native speaker' that is understood and accepted by most interlocutors in Japan to mean someone who is a White, native speaker of English from the US or UK. Such a 'native speaker' can also be understood as a semiotic entity who serves to be both the goal and the means of language learning. He proposes that as an ideologized

project, native-speakerism is manifested in government policy statements concerning English language education, employment practices of 'native speakers', and everyday practices that paradoxically keep English language proficiency unattainable for most students, thereby ensuring that Japanese social and cultural norms are protected from undue outside influence. Toh maintains that such entrenched ideology supporting the current system of ELT is not likely to change, a sobering thought, but that we need multi-disciplinary approaches to better theorize and address native-speakerism.

Other important voices found in this section are those of Kubota and Fujimoto who, in Chapter 14, expound on the racialized nature of native-speakerism and demonstrate to how Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be utilized to uncover its workings. 'Counter-stories' told by Japanese American teachers illustrate how unfair hiring practices, collegial insensitivity, and student' deeply-held beliefs bear on their professional lives in unpredictable ways. Being unrecognized as 'native speakers' in classrooms and teacher lounges challenges their legitimacy in a system that conflates race with nationality, language ability, and essentially the right to teach. Critiquing how English-only policy goes tandem with marketable 'native speaker' teachers conducting classes in that manner, Yphantides in Chapter 15 moves the discussion to recent research that suggests the benefits of using students' L1. She proposes that we learn more from those involved in bilingual and multicultural education and not rely on default English-only pedagogy just because one's institution advertises its language program as such, although Rivers has shown above that this has its consequences. Seargeant in Chapter 17 offers some optimistic views, suggesting that with increased exposure to a variety of Englishes through social media and actual experiences, students in Japan may become more open minded about their evaluations of what English(es) their teachers use in the classroom. This is one concrete area where more research could be conducted and indeed, student voices need to be included in this discussion.

Conclusion

Working toward overcoming native-speakerism and the resulting prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination that affects not only teachers but students as well, will require renewed dialog and commitment to unravel and rectify current practices. Not unlike discussions on racism, which oftentimes elicit strong defensive reactions (Bonilla-

Silva, 2010), initiating conversations on native-speakerism can prompt misunderstanding that the issues are about individual teachers. Listening to the voices of a range of scholars and practicing teachers who are concerned about improving ELT so that learners can develop learning goals and skills appropriate for their needs can be the first step toward participating in a more equitable and humane undertaking.

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